

# Sealants

## **What are Sealants?**

The premolar and molar teeth are the largest teeth in the mouth. They have a larger surface area and have several grooves and pits on the chewing surface. These grooves can be deep and are a prime place for plaque and acid to build up and cause cavities. It is for this reason that many dentists will suggest applying sealants, especially on young children. A sealant is a coating that is applied to the chewing surface of the teeth creating a smooth surface to act as a barricade protecting it from decay.

Applying a sealant is a quick and easy procedure. It does not involve any anesthetic. After the teeth are cleaned, a chemical liquid is applied to the tooth. This will etch the tooth surface making it feel a little rough. After a few seconds the etching solution is rinsed away. The etching allows the sealant to bond with the tooth. The sealant is then applied in a liquid form and a light is applied to the surface of the tooth to speed up the hardening process. Sealants can be reapplied every 5 to 10 years. Sealants are very effective in preventing decay and in some cases can prevent additional damage where decay has already begun.